

Enclosed please find:

- 1) A copy of a letter to Mr. Larry Cole; region 4 Federal EPA, ground water administrator.
- 2) A fact sheet from Protect Our Water
- 3) A news release on Belton's Pond, an area close to the water extraction site.

These are provided to you as a way of becoming more educated on the potential extraction of 495,000 gallons of water per day over a 20 year time span.

Thank you in advance for your interest.

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6 June 2016

Dear Mr. Cole

I am writing you in reference to a developing situation in the community of Sumterville, Florida. A company wishes to draw roughly 495,000 gallons of water from the aquifer daily and sell it to a local bottler of water. Their well will be in close proximity to several springs and a body of water called Belton's Millpond. The company has applied for a permit from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. This permit is pending. I am wondering if the Federal mapping of wetlands and the State of Florida's mapping of the same wetlands coincide (the property is near the junction of US 301 and CR 470). If they do not, as I suspect, then the question becomes which set of mappings takes precedence? Is this an area that the Federal EPA should be involved in? Since the permit is pending a timely response to this inquiry would be very much appreciated.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,

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*PROTECT OUR WATER* is a group of concerned citizens dedicated to efforts to deny the issuance of permit number 20020576 by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, to withdraw almost half a million gallons of water a day from the Florida aquifer for the purpose of bottling and selling it back to the public.

May 16, 2016

## FACT SHEET

### INFORMATION CONCERNING PERMIT REQUEST #20020576 PENDING BEFORE THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SWFWMD)

#### **On Nov. 12, 2015 a permit request was filed with SWFWMD**

to pump an annual average of 496,000 gallons of water a day, and up to 893,000 gallons a day on a 'peak month,' from a well to be drilled in Sumterville, FL. The property is owned by Spring Water Resources Properties, LLC of Ocala, FL, and is located near the intersection of CR470 and SR 301. The request states that the water will be trucked, using approximately 80 semi tankers, to Azure Bottling Company in Leesburg for bottling. During the 'peak month,' the number of semi tankers would increase to 144 per day. The permit, if approved, would be in force for 20 years.

**On the same day the request was submitted, a business plan was filed by SWR, as required.** It stated that they were working to obtain state and city permits (and presumably county permits as well). A possible change in zoning from agricultural to commercial, changes in the county road system to accommodate transporting truckloads of water, and various requests for building permits at the well site may be required to be submitted to various agencies including the Sumter County Board of Commissioners for approval. As of May 16, 2016 no requests related to this permit have been received by the County. To monitor submission of these requests, contact the Sumter County Development Service Director, Karl Holley at 352-689-4463. It should be noted, according to Bradley Arnold, Sumter County Administrator, in a written response to a concerned citizen's questions, that it has not yet been determined whether a zoning change will be necessary or whether the increase in traffic will be significant "compared to the amount of existing lime rock truck movements in this mining, cement and prison section of CR 470." In other words, there appears to be no agreement as to what, if any, changes or permits are required by the Sumter County Board of Commissioners.

**SWFWMD is accepting emails from the public related to this permit.**  
**THE PUBLIC CAN EMAIL SWFWMD WITH THEIR CONCERNS**  
([michelle.hopkins@watermatters.org](mailto:michelle.hopkins@watermatters.org)). The public meeting that dealt with this permit

request was held on May 4, 2016. According to SWFWMD, each permit request will appear on the monthly agenda only once. Please note these meetings do not rise to the level of a public hearing. A public hearing is triggered by requests for withdrawing an average of 500,000 gallons of water per day and this request is for 496,000 gallons.

**Regarding Azure Bottling Company of Leesburg**, a visit to that facility and conversations with the office manager and the owner confirm that the company, as it stands now, does not have the staff, the facilities or equipment to process and bottle that amount of water on a daily basis. Their website states their current capacity is 14,000 bottles an hour. That is not sufficient to handle 496,000 gallons of water per day. That is not to say that this can't change; facilities and equipment can be purchased and staff hired. Another possibility is that Azure Bottling Co. may act as a conduit for another company, in another community and perhaps another Water Management District. Leesburg is served by both the SWFWMD as well as the St. Johns Water Management District. We simply don't know. We do know that SWR is "free to sell water for bottling to whomever it pleases." (communication from Ralph Kerr, Senior Professional Geologist, Water Use Permit Bureau).

SWR submitted two business plans. In the first one, SWR claimed that Azure had contracted with or "contacted" a number of named companies, such as Publix or Winn Dixie, to buy the bottled water. In the revised business plan they state that there are "contracts or contacts" with unnamed parties for the distribution of the water. SWR is deliberately vague here and it is quite likely that there may be few or no contracts for the sale of the water at this time. This is significant since under the applicable rules, SWR has to demonstrate "demand and need" for the water before a permit may be granted. In fact, Azure, in its letter to SWR, states that it may not have sufficient demand for 5 years, yet SWR claims, wrongly, that such demand exists.

#### **In Summary:**

- \* SWFWMD is the party responsible for reviewing and acting on the request to drill, pump and sell the water.
- \* The Sumter County Board of Commissioners is responsible for acting on building permit requests and zoning changes needed, if any, and for reviewing and taking action. As of May 16, 2016, no requests have been submitted to the County.
- \* There will not be a public hearing on this application because the annual water withdrawal will average less than 500,000 gallons per day. Citizens may comment on the request by email (see the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph for details). The one and only public meeting regarding this request was held on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- \* There is no indication that Azure Water currently has the staff or infrastructure to bottle the amount of water that will be withdrawn, nor does it have sufficient contracts to sell the bottled water. Questions arise as to how this component of the plan will be met.

#### **Contact Information:**

To review the application, visit <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/permits/epermitting/> and provide the application #20020576.



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# Pumping water may impact Beltons Millpond

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Posted: Thursday, May 26, 2016 3:00 pm

Scott Callahan [scott.callahan@dailycommercial.com](mailto:scott.callahan@dailycommercial.com) | [0 comments](#)

**BUSHNELL** — A consulting engineer for a company seeking to pump 496,000 gallons of water a day from two springs near here has conceded this could affect the spring flow of nearby Beltons Millpond, so the company has agreed to monitor the situation.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District had asked SWR Properties LLC of Ocala to evaluate how its requested pumping will affect Beltons Millpond in the Shady Brook Golf Course and RV Park, located just east of the intersection of U.S. Highway 301 and County Road 470.

SWR owns about 10 acres southeast of the intersection of U.S. 301 and CR 470 that contains what has been called Fern Spring and Heart Spring. From here, the company wants to pump 496,000 gallons of water a day for 20 years and sell it to Azure Water, which has a bottling plant off Tally Road in Leesburg.

In response to SWFWMD's request, Vivian J. Pielski, senior project geologist with Andreyev Engineering Inc. of St. Petersburg, said she was unable to say exactly how the proposed pumping might affect Beltons Millpond.

"Due to the lack of consistent data for Beltons Mill Pond spring complex, it is difficult to determine what affect the proposed withdrawal will have on the spring flow," she said. "Therefore, the applicant is willing to monitor the water level of a spring pond in that complex along with other area water level data in order to determine if the proposed withdrawals are having any effect on the springs, other area surface water bodies, and the Floridan aquifer."

However, because Beltons Millpond spring flow could be varying anywhere when from 45,220 gallons per day (gpd) to 51.8 million gpd, depending on rainfall, "there may be times when the proposed withdrawal of 496,000 gpd at SWR will exceed the spring flow at Belton's Millpond," Pielski concedes.

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The millpond is fed by three to four springs with the water eventually going into Shady Brook and then to Lake Panasoffkee.

Pielski said the SWR's monitoring results will be turned over the SWFWMD in an Annual Analysis Report provided by March 1 of every year. The monitoring will include rainfall data, a monitoring well on SWR's property, and water level gauges at Beltons Millpond, Fern Spring and Heart Spring.

"The results of the analysis will be used to determine whether the withdrawal from the previous year had any detrimental effects on area surface water body elevations and/or Floridan aquifer water elevations," she said. "If necessary, any decisions on proposed changes of withdrawal amounts will be proposed to the district as a mitigation of the potential drawdown effects."

Besides sinking a 10-inch-wide water well, SWR Properties plans to build a pumping station, driveway and modular office building on its property. Eighty 6,200-gallon trucks per day on average and 144 trucks on a peak month daily average would ship the water to Azure, according to documents.

There is no timetable for when SWFWMD could approve or deny the permit, but Azure's 20-year buy offer comes with a clause saying the water must be delivered beginning this calendar year.

SWR said in documents it hopes to be up and running by November.

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Posted in News on Thursday, May 26, 2016 3:00 pm.

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16h



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17h



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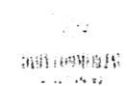


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